



## MY REPORT SINCE THE LAST VILTIS:

The "present era," accounting my progress with the struggle against the "White Plague" can begin with December 16, 1951. On that date, the Mile-Hi and the Sherwood Club, jointly presented a folk dance program at the Sanatorium theatre. That was the first time that I left the Texas building. I was bundled up in pillows, wrapped in blankets, tied in babushkas and wheeled down the two blocks up the mall. The beauty of the theatre, without and within surprised me greatly. I was wheeled down near the stage from where I M. C'd the entire program. I felt elated and happy beyond words and grateful to the merciful God for another opportunity at my beloved recreation. Both groups performed excellently. And the audience of patients, who were previously not exposed to folk dancing, enjoyed the entire presentation. It seems as if that particular program served as a "lift." I commenced on my up-grade for sure, and started regaining weight.

Christmas was a happy holiday. I'd almost dare to say, one of the happiest and that in spite of being in a sanatorium. Of course, this sanatorium is different — it's like "home when away from home." Many even find it better than home and regret to leave this place. I was remembered with a great number of cards, gifts, and even with a cute, artificial Xmas tree, all decorated, which the Czernek sisters sent me; that completed the holiday "spirit." Over my little radio I was able to hear midnite Mass which was most elaborately sung at the Denver Cathedral. The holiday meal, as usual over here, whether a Jewish or a Christian holiday, is not only plentiful, but delicious and in accordance with the tradition of that particular feast day. One would also think, observing the custom here, that on holidays the stomach expands twice the size in order to be able to take in the double portion of food.

On February 26th, we celebrated my birthday. Again, my friends remembered me with many cards and presents. We had a delicious birthday cake which we cut up for a treat to the patients on our floor. Ray and Lil Mathews, Bob Allison and Al Geary, came over to help celebrate.

On March 16th, we had another folk dance program which the Mile-Hi presented. It was a varied and an excellent program, stressing Jewish and Lithuanian dances, even tho the group did not contain a single Jew or a Lith. Again, the program was well received by the appreciative patients who have now come to look forward to folk dance programs which rapidly became their favorite.

The sanatorium is very generous with entertainment for the patients (providing the patient is in class VI and up. Po'lil me was only in class III.) Good movies twice a week, other types of entertainers such as singers and instrumentalists, holiday parties (Khanuka, Purim, etc.) bingo, games, and picnics sponsored by the local auxiliary make for a well rounded program. Such generous consideration is seldom matched by any other institution. Then, too, they have an excellent library of nearly 20,000 books of the widest interest-fiction, history, philosophy, Judaica and a place for research materials for the erudite, and our own "radio station" with broadcasts from 8:30-11:30 AM put on by the patients. We are likewise visited by members from the St. Vincent de Paul (Catholic) Society, two Lutheran groups and the auxil-

liary members of the JCRS.

On April 10th, the week-celebration of the Passover was observed at the Sanatorium, The "Seder" was celebrated on Passover eve in the main dining room with all the ritual and traditions. Negroes, Poles, Italians, Irish, Ukrainians, French along with the Jews, celebrated in the true spirit of brotherhood, the festival of redemption, freedom and spring, the festival which Christ Himself observed with all strictness and known to the Christian world as the "Last Supper."

On April 19th, my Denver pal, Betty Geary, was married to Rodger Johnson at the Methodist church and I was permitted to attend the wedding. That was the first time I left Spivak. The day was beautiful and so was the wedding. Since most of the wedding guests, including the celebrants, were members of folk dance groups, the dancing after the ceremony was exclusively folk, which delighted me. I think that folk dancing is, by far, more interesting than insipid and aimless rag-time "social" dancing.

I couldn't go to the National Folk Festival this year. However, during that same week we had our own folk festival when once again the Sherwood Club (from the Steele Community Center) came down on May 19th. They presented a truly grand show covering a great number of dances. An additional treat was the live music which was supplied by Mrs. Tess O'Brien on the piano, Florence Rithcie, violin, while Druscilla Ferree, who was also the Charming M. C., and Pat Yingst, played the accordion. Casey Shaw added color to the evening with two humorous recitations cleverly presented.

As for my health, by May I had regained all my lost weight — 40 lbs and reached my previous normal of 120, regaining at a rate of 5-6 lbs per month. Meanwhile, in a manner of "It-can-be-told-now," Mrs. Friedman, one of our beloved nurses who was on duty when I was brought on a stretcher to Spivak during July of 1951, revealed that, when I was brought in, my opportunities to survive the night were nil. She had called the priest to administer the Last Rites (Extreme Unction) and asked my friend, Ray Mathews, as to where the body was to be sent. While Dr. Klein expressed that he "wasn't giving a nickle for my chance to recover." But — "Ah done did" — For all of which I am grateful to a merciful God and an excellent institution with an unbeatable and sympathetic staff.

By February, I was taken out from my single room "on accounta because" I wasn't "that" sick any more. I was placed in a double room and later given a roommate, probaly the only other Lithuanian in Spivak, Bruno Prusas, of Chicago. He is a fine lad and speaks a good Lithuanian and we continually revert to the Lith vernacular and expressions.

Though I was still a bed (bad) patient, I managed to meet many patients, exchanging visits to each other's rooms and holding bull sessions, discussing various topics and pleasantly whiling away the time. There are quite a number of talented and interesting persons and also DP's with harrowing experiences to tell. Time not only passes, but races by.

On June 26th, I under went an operation for the removal of my left kidney. The nurses and doctors made the ordeal very painless. On the following day they had me out of bed. If modern techniques continue advancing, they'll have patients get off the operating table immediately after the operation and clean up he mess he caused. My folks (Aunt and Uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Antanas Urbutis) came in on the day of the operation and spent two days with me. Frank Zapolis, an Ateitis member, also arrived at that time and spent a few days. In fact,

they inaugurated a flow of visitors from everywhere and it was wonderful to see everyone.

Three weeks later, on July 19th, I was attending my buddy Bob Allison's wedding to Doris Vail in Denver. Fast work. Jerry Joris and Jimmie Radastits also came in for the wedding. It was a happy reunion. Jerry is really the "most angelest angel" that ever lived. The Lewis sisters, Jerry and Charlotte Chen, were God-sent. How I'll ever be able to repay all their favors and cares in my behalf is beyond me.

One of the happy surprises of the year was the visit of a group of friends from Toronto, Canada. They decided to spend their vacation in Colorado so that they could, meantime, visit me and present a program. They were Bernice Bromby, Russ Pickering, Margaret and Carson Whelan, all from Toronto and members of the Danish group of the late John Madsen. They were joined by Jane and Frank Giori of Niagara Falls. This sextet presented a most excellent program in our auditorium on August 2nd. The same day, Halfdan (Bud) Baadsgaard of Minneapolis, also arrived to see me ere he left for Switzerland.

During the last week in August, my sister-in-law, Lillian Dulys and her daughter Nancy, arrived. Nancy is now a big girl of six and grew considerably during the year I was away. Nancy was a PM baby and a tiny mite who had to spend her first month on earth in an incubator. No one would ever think now that she was ever that. In their honor, I got two days leave that week and Jerry took us around sight seeing in the mountains. We also attended another wedding, that of Harold Ryan to Lois Bartholome.

On September 6th, I was counted among the lucky ones who were able to go to see Sonia Heine's Ice spectacle — and for free, too!! It was a beautiful performance of rich pageantry and brilliant coloring and of intricate dancing gracefully executed on ice skates. It was an extravaganza and a riot of spectacular color. The comedians were superb. They alone would be worth going to see.

On our campus we have a toy-like synagog. During the Jewish High Holidays I attended it. Among the patients we also have a young Rabbi, students of Rabbinical seminaries and a young cantor with the most beautiful voice I've ever heard. Critics may describe it as "sweet and clear as a silver bell." To me it is the most thrilling voice in the world. On Yom Kippur eve he sang the Kol Nidrey, one of the most stirring melodies as not found in any other religion. This prayer originated in the 4th century. After the first council of Christian Bishops at Nicaea in 315. The policy of forced conversion of Jews was instituted. Since then millions died rather than become apostates. There were Thousands who desiring to remain alive, accepted Christianity. Many of these practiced Judaism secretly. It is these events which brought Kol Nidrey into existence. A plea for release of "All vows" which they were forced to make.

The following day another stirring prayer which gives one goose pimples, was sung, the Yizkor (Memorare) for the dead. Practically everyone in that congregation are survivors of Hitler's extermination policy, some still have the concentration camp serial number tatoed on their arms. All of these lost every member of their family in the various gas chambers, crematoriums, or were just plainly slain or froze to death while in transfer. The young cantor himself is of such a background and he sang it with so much feeling, depht and unearthly plaintive sweetness that it was no wonder that practically all present wept for the beloved lost in terrible manners at an age when everyone complacently believed that

the twentieth century was a civilized one.

All of the above indicates that since last year I have made wonderful progress to put it midly. The doctors, the nurses and the friends who saw me last year can readily testify at the recovery which astounds them. The comeback was not all smooth. There were plenty of moments which seemed despairing, yet, as the hymn goes:

"Trust Him when dark doubts assail thee  
Trust Him when thy strength is small  
Trust Him when to simply trust Him  
Seems the hardest thing of all."

Such times were many and I shall continue trusting "Till the strom of life is over and the trusting days are past." Meanwhile, along with the Psalmist, I can trustfully say "Credo videre bona Domini in terra viventium. — I believe I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living." I am ever grateful to the ever living and merciful God, for His mercies shown to me, a miserable sinner.

Nor can I forget those who came to my assistance when ill fate first truck me. The William Hargraves of Landsdowne, Pa. and the Frank Kaltmans from Newark, N. J. And to my ever faithful buddies, Jerry Joris and Charlotte Chen, who throughout this year have worked hard and cared for my needs.

I would not know where to start when it comes to thanking the doctors, nurses, and staff of this place for their care and devotion. My profoundest admiration to the auxiliary ladies and all others who tirelessly raise the funds to run this wonderful place with an extra special thank you to the Denver group who come out often to visit us, treat us with goodies, and entertain us with picnics, parties, shows and games. My deep gratitude to the gentle, silver haired man of God, Monsignor Flanagan, who comes here so very often to visit us and to administer our needs. Nor will I ever forget my many wonderful friends. Lord, How fortunate I am!! God's blessing be upon all of you. A jolly Khanuka, a Merry Christmas and a Happy Year to all of you and happy dancing to the jolly tribe of folk dancers.

Pasimatysim, Vyts-Fin

## RECORDS BY VYTS IN ISRAEL

Miss Katherine Haviland, whospent the past two years in Acre, Israel, where she did some social service work among the Arabs, wrote the following:

"While we were playing table games at the Center and listening to the radio there came a half hour of Israel folk music with the Horras you have recorded and the Dance of the Flocks (Rkod Ha'Tlayim). They were so excited and delighted to hear their dances which they enjoy, I'm sure if the floor were not covered with tables at the time we would have started dancing."

In another letter Miss Haviland wrote:

"Did I tell you the Arabs have your records of Jewish dances? I played "Histoveyvi" and the music told them the dance before they even tried it. It's very popular."

Miss Haviland has now returned to the States. Before returning she toured in various European countries. She visited Morry and Nancy Gelman, who are now in Munich. They went "Folk Dance Slumming" and had a wonderful time.



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